

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 13324 101806Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 AID-05 SS-15 STR-04

ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 FEA-01

SSM-05 /113 W

-----075350 110423Z /17

R 101515Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8185

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA POUCH

USDOC WASHDC

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UNCLAS CAIRO 13324

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP ETRD EG

SUBJ: CHANGES IN EGYPTIAN IMPORT REGULATIONS

REF: (A) CAIRO 11866, B) 76 CAIRO A-118

1. SUMMARY: PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES INDICATE THAT AS RESULT OF RECENT CHANGES IN REGULATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR MAY NOW IMPORT CERTAIN COMMODITIES FORMERLY RESTRICTED TO IMPORTATION BY PUBLIC SECTOR. TEA, COTTON YARN, AND SUGAR ARE AMONG ITEMS AFFECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE DISPATCH REFTTEL (A), PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES HAVE REPORTED CHANGES IN IMPORT REGULATIONS WHICH HAVE HAD EFFECT OF PERMITTING PRIVATE IMPORTATION OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES FORMERLY REQUIRED TO BE IMPORTED THROUGH PUBLIC SECTOR:

A) TEA: MINTRADE AND SUPPLY TEWFIQ ANNOUNCED IN MID-JULY THAT PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD BE PERMITTED IMPORT LOOSE TEA. ALTHOUGH REASONS FOR THIS MOVE WERE NOT DECLARED, THEY PROBABLY RELATE TO RECENT RISES IN THE WORLD PRICE OF TEA AND THE CONSEQUENT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CAIRO 13324 101806Z

DIFFICULTY OF THE MINISTR OF SUPPLY IN MEETING DOMESTIC DEMAND FOR ITS OWN RESOURCES. FURTHER EVIDENCE OF A "TEA SQUEEZE" COMES IN MINTRADE ANNOUNCEMENT LAST WEEK THAT "CAFES AND CASIOOS" WOULD LOSE THEIR TEA ALLOCATIONS " TO MAKE SURE THIS COMMODITY IS AVAILABLE FOR THE MASSES OF RATION-CARD HOLDERS AT THE PRESENT PRICE". PERMISSION FOR PRIVATE SECTOR TO IMPORT LOOSE TEA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY REQUIREMNT THAT IT BE

PACKED AT PUBLIC SECTOR ESTABLISHMENTS, SUPPOSEDLY IN ORDER TO GUARD AGAINST "FRAUD". SOME TRADE SOURCES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT PRIVATE SECTOR WILL BE UNWILLING ENTRUST ITS TEA TO PUBLIC SECTOR PLANS FOR PACKING, AND WILL REFRAIN FROM IMPORTING AS LONG AS THIS REQUIREMENT EXISTS.

(B) COTTON YARN: AS INDICATED CAIRO 12759, EMBASSY UNDER STANDS FROM CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES THAT COTTON YARN MAY NOW BE IMPORTED BY PRIVATE SECTOR, ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO FORMAL DECREE TO THAT EFFECT.

C) SUGAR AND CORN (MAIZE): MINTRADE AND SUPPLY TEWFIQ HAS ANNOUNCED THAT STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE IF PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE PERMITTED IMPORT SUGAR AND CORN (MAIZE). WE UNDERSTAND THAT IN PRACTICE, PRIVATE SECTOR COMMERCIAL USERS OF SUGAR HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ALLOWED TO IMPORT THIS COMMODITY DIRECTLY SO LONG AS QUANTITIES INVOLVED DO NOT EXCEED NEEDS OF THE PARTICULAR ESTABLISHMENT.

3. AS A GENERAL MATTER, MANY EXISTING IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CAN BE CIRCUMVENTED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO PURCHASE COMMODITIES IN FREE ZONE AREAS SUCH AS PORT SAID. AS LONG AS QUANTITIES DO NOT EXCEED WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE REQUIRED FOR PERSONAL USE OR CONSUMPTION, INDIVIDUALS CAN "IMPORT" MOST ITEMS BY BRINGING THEM THROUGH CUSTOMS, PAYING APPROPRIATE DUTIES. EILTS

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